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JEAN T. HEAK
HEAD VA. STATE
RICHMOND

County to participate in statewide 'relay'

The Appomattox County Recreation Department is sponsoring the county's participation in the "Whistle Stop Relay," June 2-4.

Julie Coffman and Bill Britton are coordinating the Appomattox Whistle Stop Relay, part of the "Life-Be In It" activities being observed nationwide. The Westvaco Corporation has contributed the entrance fee for Appomattox County's participation in the "Life-Be In It" program.

Appomattox County's role in the relay will be June 3 from approximately 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. All localities in Virginia are being invited to participate in the relay by some means of physical activity: walking, bicycling, jogging, roller skating, or some other creative mode of transportation. Individuals can represent themselves, their families, or specific groups and organizations such as schools, PTAs, specialty groups, civic organizations, churches, youth groups, and businesses.

The Whistle Stop Relay will begin in the far western part of the state and move across on the main highways to converge in Richmond on June 4. Over 1,500 miles will be covered by the participants and nearly 125 agencies will be involved statewide in developing and organizing the event. The "Life-Be In It" batons will switch hands more than 2,500 times.

Gov. Chuck Robb has enthusiastically endorsed the Whistle Stop Relay and will participate in the final leg in Richmond.

All active participants in the relay will sign a "Life-Be In It" scroll immediately following their pledged distance and the scroll will be placed in the LBII baton. The relay batons will be carried by the designated participants from the origination points through each locality, until they end up at the State Capitol.

The Whistle Stop Relay is intended to create an awareness of the importance of being physically active, to create an opportunity to get people off their backbones and into life, to create a program to help make "Life-Be In It" a household concept, to emphasize participation and not competition, and to encourage community cooperation and collaboration.

Prospective participants can call Julie Coffman at 352-8611 for registration in the Whistle Stop Relay. All participants must register by May 10.

Firemen warm up to firefighting exercise

MEMBERS OF THE CONCORD VOLUNTEER Fire Department recently participated in a training drill which, as this photo shows, was much like the real thing. The volunteers practiced on a house which had been mostly destroyed in a fire Jan. 26 near Thomas Terrace on Route 460. Since the house had to be removed, the fire department was asked to burn what remained. Shown above in the drill are Tom Shupe, department chief (foreground) and (manning the hose, from left) Gary Martin, Gary Davidson, Dell Bagby, and, with his head in the flames, Richard Carroll, the department captain. Bobby Moore was the training officer at the drill, which was conducted April 22. (Photo by Jeff Spitzer)

School board meeting set

The Appomattox County School Board will meet next Wednesday (May 11) at 3:30 p.m. in the school board office on Main Street.

Along with the regular monthly reports, board members will review personnel contracts to be released for the 1983-84 school session; discuss a committee to study academic and vocational requirements, diplomas, and class ranking of students; and consider a revised evaluation program for instructional personnel.

Merritt will run for special legislature

Mrs. Lucy Merritt, of the Stonewall District in Appomattox County is announcing this week that she is running for the Silver Haired Legislature for the 18th District.

"I would be able, if elected, to present any bill before the General Assembly in August," she commented.

Merritt, who works for the Central Virginia Commission on Aging, is a native of Georgia, living in that area until 1950 when she moved to the Washington area, living there until the family moved, a few years ago, to Appomattox County.

Merritt has wide work experience, having worked for 29 years with a loan company, 27 and one-half of those years in the Washington area and the remainder of that time in the Lynchburg area.

"I've had experience in administrative work, personnel work, IBM computers and other work," she said.

Lucy and her husband, Robert, are active members of Trinity United Methodist Church. They have three daughters and seven grandchildren.

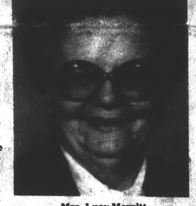
"We had to have 50 names on our petition," said Merritt. "I had in excess of the required 50 and I have requested a ballot be sent to everyone on the petition. The ballot must be returned by May 10.

Ballots will be counted by the Virginia Department for the Aging staff during the weekend.

Virginia Department for the Aging will call the Commission on Aging in Lynchburg with the election results. In the event of a tie, the winner shall be determined at the Commission on Aging by the toss of a coin with both candidates present.

Announcement will be made of the winners by the Governor's Office and the Virginia Department on Aging via press release and the Commission on Aging press release.

Legislators will be required to attend a Virginia Department on Aging training event at the Hilton in Lynchburg. Virginia Department for Aging will send information prior to the training and will pay for allowable expenses incured at the training.



Mrs. Lucy Merritt

On August 7 the Silver Haired Legislators will go to Richmond to discuss in committee the bills they drafted earlier in the summer. Much the same as in the Virginia General Assembly, the Silver Haired Legislature committee will submit bills to the full house and senate. Legislation that is approved by both houses will be considered by the Governor and the General Assembly in making policies and in developing legislation.

MS awareness emphasized

Volunteers will be seeking donations to support Multiple Sclerosis research and treatment tomorrow (Friday) in Appomattox County.

May has been proclaimed National Multiple Sclerosis Awareness month, and Appomattox County, as well as the Town of Appomattox, have officially proclaimed May as MS Awareness Month in the county.

MS patients, family, friends and other interested volunteers will be collecting from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Food World, Wilbun's, Farmers Bank (Triangle Plaza Branch and Main Street downtown), and Central Fidelity Bank.

Sixty percent of the money collected goes to the local MS chapter, according to Bill Britton, spokesman for the Appomattox MS Support Group.

Nineteen percent of the collected money is used for administration on the national level, and 21 percent is used to fund research.

Last year, the Appomattox MS Support Group collected $600, and the goal was $500, according to Britton.

Multiple Sclerosis is a neurological disease - a disabling affliction of the brain and spinal cord. In MS, the substance called Myelin, which insulates the nerve fibres, disintegrates and is replaced by scar tissue. This distorts or blocks nerve inpulses which control such functions as walking, talking, seeing, etc.

MS is not a mental disease, nor is it contagious. The disease is unpredictable. Not all patients experience the same symptoms, and improvement can occur, lasting for limited or extended periods of time. It is estimated that 500,000 Americans suffer from MS and related diseases.

The objectives of MS research are to determine whether MS is caused initially by a virus or viruses; to understand the nature of the biochemical and immunological changes in the body during fluctuations of the disease; to discover if the patient is allergic to a chemical constituent within his or her body; to perfect a diagnostic test; and to find more useful drugs and rehabilitative procedures.

"We'd like to make the citizens of Appomattox County aware that there are at least seven MS patients in the county, and we do have an active MS support group that meets the fourth Tuesday night of each month at the Memorial United Methodist Church," Britton says.

Marvin House, Jr., and Robin Britton are co-chairpersons of the Appomattox County MS fundraising drive.

Babcock portrait is dedicated

A portrait of the late Dr. Havilah Babcock, an Appomattox County native, was dedicated recently at the University of South Carolina Faculty House, Columbia, S.C.

The portrait is by George Dan'l Hoffman who has lived in Columbia for a number of years.

Babcock, born in Appomattox County, the son of the late Homer C. Babcock, was married to the former Alice Cheatham of Appomattox County, the sister of the late Z.E. Cheatham of Evergreen.

Babcock was a USC faculty member for 38 years and was English department chairman from 1935 to 1965. His courses were so popular that students signed up a year in advance in order to be able to get into the class.

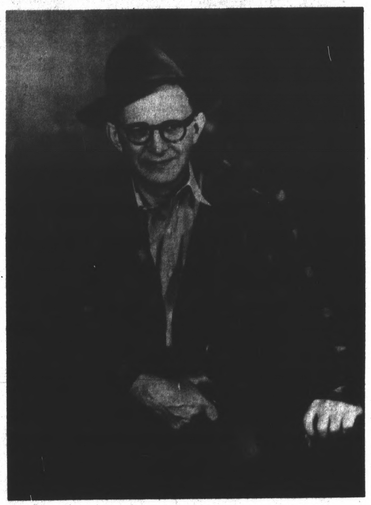
Babcock, well known for his books on hunting and fishing, wrote among others, **Jaybirds Go To Hell On Friday, I Don't Want to Shoot An Elephant,** and **My Health is Better in November.**

The Chicago Sunday **Tribune** had this to say of Babcock's book **I Don't Want to Shoot an Elephant.** "This book has wit, originality and the magic of sportsmen's world. But most of all it rollicks with the adventure of hunters, dogs, and that champion of all game birds, the bobwhite quail."

Babcock was a friend and confidante of the late Bernard Baruch, advisor to presidents. Baruch often attended Babcock's classes and the two hunted and fished together.

Babcock's friendship with Baruch resulted in the Baruch silver collection going to the University of South Carolina.

Babcock's widow, who resides in Columbia, S.C. commissioned the portrait. It will hang permanently in the faculty house on the Horseshoe.



THE LATE HAVILAH BABCOCK, Appomattox native, pictured above, not as he looked in the recently dedicated portrait but in a more relaxed pose, that of the hunter and fisherman.

Father Darkleaf

By CALVIN ROBINSON

Greetings. To you, and to the merry month of May. On Martha Street we had no crowning of a Queen of May, nor did we have a parade. But we had ideal weather and got a lot of yard work behind us. Friday was great, for I found a four leaf clover in the yard and rushed to add it to my collection, pressed in a Bible. Supposed to bring good luck. Well, so far it's working. My garden has been disced, have all manner of plants in the basement ready to go outside and may start planting today. Was warned by one friend that we are not yet out of danger of frost and I suppose there is no such thing as being secure from some mishap.

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Around town, azaleas are in bloom, Iris are in bloom, dogwood is in bloom. Tulips are in bloom. Wet weather has delayed farmers but catching up has begun. As I view our world, a vast majority craves normal times and a slackening of tensions. We are so proud of our schools and note that some 25,000 seniors will graduate at the many fine colleges in our state. Have we jobs for that many? Gotta open the door of opportunity, somehow. For the next few weeks high school and college seniors and school teachers and administrators will be so very busy.

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Backtrack: add one lilac to the list of bloomers. Just yards from My Den window.

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Sports question. In basketball, which is the top player, Ralph Sampson or Moses Malone? Both from our state, Malone a pro. ACHS has surely had one of its greater years in sports and best of futures to the seniors. Thanks, too, to the coaches and fans.

• • •

Entirely personal. Had a one round bout with a bumblebee in my basement. Ripped spot in a screen door? Time now to fix such things. Heavens to Betsy, no lack of chores.

• • •

As for jobs, one of the greatest in all history was surely that related in Genesis 2:20. Adam had to come up with names for all the critters.

• • •

I had intended to devote today's column to Polk Miller. Who he? Born in Prince Edward County, Grape Lawn, near Burkeville, August 2, 1844, he became a pharmacist, developed many preparations for treatment of dogs, some still used; Civil War veteran (Second Richmond Howitzers) and followed the flag all the way to Appomattox. But his fame was as an entertainer and banjo player. Gifted in voice he was in great demand and was one of the early Edison recording artists. One of his best was "The Bonnie Blue Flag." I recall that the late Appomattox Mayor, C. S. McDearmon, told me that he heard Polk Miller perform. Miller was likely named for James Knox Polk who became President the year of Miller's birth. May pick up some more on this subject, but will sign off by noting that three great entertainers, featuring banjo, vocals and general excellence came from this general area of Virginia, Joel Walker Sweeney, Polk Miller and the current star, Roy Clark. Miller died in 1913. On his tomb in Hollywood, Richmond Cemetery is written: "Honest citizen, faithful friend, Confederate Patriot, Christian Gentleman. Virginia's Son, Loving and Beloved. Peace to his ashes." (source: January, 1960, Hobbies Magazine.)